

# Network News

Parent Information Network  
Arizona Department of Education  
Exceptional Student Services

August 2000, Vol. 9 No. 1

## Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks

An initiative to combine training, information and leadership efforts for parents of students receiving special education (SPED) services was launched on Jan. 12, by the Arizona Department of Education/ Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS), Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona and Raising Special Kids. This effort is Arizona's response to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 which calls for increased emphasis on parent participation and for states to provide more information and training opportunities to parents.

Parent support organizations and state agencies that primarily provide training and information for parents of children with disabilities were invited to participate in the initiative called *Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks*. The participating groups have been meeting monthly to plan how they can collectively offer more information and training opportunities to parents in all regions of Arizona. So far, they have drafted a mission statement, a vision, and goals and objectives for training, information and parent involvement. Their vision is that "All children and families in Arizona receive appropriate services and supports in a timely manner."

A master calendar of all related training opportunities offered by the participating agencies and organizations will soon be posted on the ADE/ESS Parent Information Network Home Page, [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals). Links to participating groups with web sites will also be posted.

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Most public libraries in Arizona are equipped with Internet access and staff members who will assist library patrons in finding information via the Internet. Many school districts are now making their school computer labs available to families of students. (adapted from *Special Edition*, ADE/ESS, Fall 2000)

## Eight more capacity building grants awarded

For the past two years, school districts and charter schools in Arizona have had an opportunity to apply for Improved Parent and School Decision Making Grants from the ADE/ESS. The grants were awarded on a competitive basis and were part of the commitment of ADE/ESS to help school districts implement the IDEA emphasis on training and access to information. They are intended to help parents understand their

team role so they will be able to become more active participants and make a partnership a reality between school and home.

As a result of the grants, many innovative ideas have been implemented around the state including parent websites, multi-district newsletters, workshops and presentations for parents and professionals, parent and professional information centers, and parent resource specialists within districts.

During the 2000-2002 school years the following districts and charters will be continuing or beginning projects to improve the partnership and team atmosphere with parents in their attendance area: Flagstaff USD, EduPreneurship Student Center, Picacho Elementary (combined with Toltec and Eloy districts), Somerton ESD, St. David USD, Sonoita Elementary (combined with Patagonia districts and the Patagonia Community Montessori School), Young USD, and Sierra Vista Public Schools.

The Special Education Directors' Institute, Oct. 11-12, at the Mesa Hilton will feature a panel discussion on the grants by representatives from Casa Grande ESD, Amphitheater USD, and Sonoita ESD. PIN specialists listed below are available to assist interested districts with any of the activities listed above or in other parent involvement ventures.

### **Need workshops & training for parents or staff?**

Trainings for parents can help a district meet the intent of IDEA's increased emphasis on parent participation in the special education process. Through the workshops, parents can gain the necessary skills to support the fulfillment of their child's IEP or IFSP.

The Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialists listed below are scheduling presentations for the next few months. To obtain a list of their trainings, or to request a special workshop, call or e-mail the specialist for your county.

Several video workshops are now available, some with facilitator's and viewer's guides so that a district, school, or parent group may use their own trainer. A PIN Specialist can provide or recommend relevant complementary handouts from the PIN Clearinghouse for these workshops. It's also possible to schedule a joint workshop with the ADE/ESS Program Specialist and the PIN Specialist both participating. For a list of scheduled trainings, please see **Coming Events**, below. The ADE/ESS PIN Specialists are:

#### ***Apache and Navajo Counties***

Jana Bays, 520-289-6760

E-mail: JLBAYS@winslow-az.net

***Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee Counties***

Karen Santa Maria, 520-742-6075

E-mail: merkade@cybertrails.com

***Coconino, Mohave, and Yavapai Counties***

Becky Raabe, 520-526-2566

E-mail: BECKYRAABE@aol.com

***East Maricopa County***

Glenda Frank, 623-330-6801

E-mail: gfrank2001@yahoo.com

***Gila, Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Yuma Counties***

Shirley Hilts-Scott, 520-749-3942

E-mail: sscott@dakotacom.net

***La Paz and Western Maricopa Counties***

Tina Swearingen, 520-836-3023

E-mail: kswear99@cybertrails.com

**College planning documents available**

Looking for something to help with the planning process for college? The HEATH Resource Center, the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities, has two publications to help guide students who are college bound.

- *Creating Options: A Resource on Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities* (2000). The annually revised guide contains information about federal financial aid programs and other sources of financial assistance for individuals with disabilities. The document can be downloaded from the HEATH web site in portable document format (PDF): [www.heath-resource-center.org](http://www.heath-resource-center.org)

- *1999 College Freshmen with Disabilities: A Biennial Statistical Profile*. It includes surveys of students enrolled in public and private nonprofit colleges and universities in the fall of 1998. Disabilities reported on include: speech, orthopedic, learning, health-related, partial sight or blindness, hearing, and others. Available in PDF at the web site or a single print copy can be obtained at no cost by calling 800-544-3284.

**Media happenings**

*Good Housekeeping*: The Aug. 2000 issue carried several articles on educational concerns including back-to-school tips, testing, homework, etc.

The Sept. issue of *Good Housekeeping* contains an article entitled "The Miracle of J.P." It's the story of one family's journey through the diagnosis and treatment of a child

with autism. If the magazine is no longer available on a newsstand near you, check with your public library for a copy. For more information on autism, visit web sites: [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org), [www.autism.org](http://www.autism.org), or [www.naar.org](http://www.naar.org).

During August, the ABC TV's Children First web site will deal with learning disabilities (LD) in its monthly column called "Talking to Kids About..." Parents may want to review and discuss this column with their child. The web site address for the column is: [www.abcchildrenfirst.com/talktokids.html](http://www.abcchildrenfirst.com/talktokids.html). Links are available to other sites on LD.

## **Question and Answer Column**

**Q.** Were any major changes made in special education in Arizona state laws passed by the legislature in its last regular session?

**A.** Yes. Significant changes were made to the categorical or disability definitions contained in the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 15 (ARS §15-761.) The ADE asked the legislature to revise the state definitions of the disabilities to agree with the federal definitions contained in the final regulations (Mar. 4, '99) for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997.

Among the changes are definitions for Autism, Hearing Impairment, Other Health Impairment, and Visual Impairment. The wording will be used by schools and agencies during the evaluation and identification of students with a disability. Changes in the definitions, statistics on Arizona students with disabilities, and updated book, video and organizational resources will be included in the revised PIN disability-specific Information Sheets. They are available from the PIN Clearinghouse and in text format on the Internet at: [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals).

Another change in the state law is the inclusion of the statement that each child shall be ensured access to the general curriculum, emphasized in IDEA '97. Reports to parents of a student's progress in meeting the goals stated in the child's IEP will be "...at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled children's progress...." All IEP goals will be written in terms compatible with the Arizona Academic Standards as used by all schools in the general curriculum.

## **OSEP wants your input on IDEA**

The U. S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) wants your views about what works in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. OSEP's Special Education Survey will guide the department as they develop the long-range plan for the IDEA National Program, which will identify national activities to link best practices to states, school systems, and families.

## **Who should participate?**

Professionals in special and general education, individuals with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, members of national organizations, and representatives of various levels of government.

### **How long is the survey?**

The survey consists of three questions, including background information about your relationship to individuals with disabilities.

### **When is it due?**

You have until Sept. 1, 2000 to complete the survey.

### **How to participate**

You can participate by completing the survey online at [www.OSEPplanning.org](http://www.OSEPplanning.org). To request a paper, large-print, or Braille version of the survey, write to Westat, OSEP Comprehensive Planning Project, 1009 Slater Rd., #110, Durham, NC 27703, call 800-510-1668, TTY 800-813-5812, or e-mail: [OSEPplanning@westat.com](mailto:OSEPplanning@westat.com). (The Council for Exceptional Children, *CEC Today*, June/July 2000)

### **State Board adopts performance standards for AIMS**

At its meeting on Aug. 1, the Arizona State Board of Education adopted performance standards for AIMS (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards) at 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades.

The performance standards describe the knowledge and skills that students must achieve in order to place in the different performance levels: Fails to Meet the Standard, Approaches the Standard, Meets the Standard, or Exceeds the Standard. This same procedure took place in Spring 1999 for the high school AIMS testing.

For additional information on the AIMS performance standards, you may contact your local school district or the ADE/Standards & Accountability Division, 602-542-5031. You may also visit the standards web site: [www.ade.az.gov/standards/](http://www.ade.az.gov/standards/)

### **Coming Events**

Please call the contact number to pre-register.

#### **IEP Process for Foster Care Workers and Parents**

Aug. 25 10:00 a.m. Phoenix, 2228 W. Northern, Ste. B-210, 520-836-3023

#### **Learning Styles & Communication within the Family and School**

Aug. 29 6:30 p.m. Casa Grande Parent Group, 520-836-3023

Sept. 30 TBA Sonoita-Patagonia for Santa Cruz County parents, 520-455-5762

#### **Overview of the Parent Information Network**

Aug. 25 2:30 p.m. Yuma County AzEIP, 520-329-8095

**Parent Participation in the IEP Process**

Aug. 27 3:00 p.m. Prescott, 930 Division St., Health Dept., 520-526-2566  
Sept. 19 10:30 a.m. Tucson, Wilmot Library, 520-749-3942  
Sept. 19 2:00 p.m. Tolleson, 9555 W. Van Buren, 520-836-3023  
Oct. 3 6:30 p.m. Wellton ESD, 520-785-3311  
Oct. 26 6:00 p.m. Pearce, 520-742-6075

**Participation in the IEP Process for DDD Support Coordinators**

Aug. 25 8:30 a.m. Yuma, 520-782-7523  
Aug. 30 8:30 a.m. Flagstaff, 520-526-2566  
Sept. 14 1:00 p.m. Globe, for Dist.VI Coordinators, 520-459-0769

**Participation in the IEP Process for Parents and Service Providers**

Sept. 12 6:30 p.m. Superior, 520-689-2812

**Sept. 6-10 2K National Spinal Cord Injury Association Annual Conference.**

Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, 60 E. 5th St. 602-239-5929, Arizona Spinal Cord Injury, or [conference@azspinal.org](mailto:conference@azspinal.org), or [www.azspinal.org](http://www.azspinal.org).

**Sept. 21 Section 504 Legal Issues: An Equal Shot at Success for Students with Disabilities.** Sponsored by the ADE/ESS, and School to Work; and the Arizona Office for Americans with Disabilities. 602-364-4005 or [mpodraz@ade.az.gov](mailto:mpodraz@ade.az.gov). Arizona State University - West, 4701 W. Thunderbird Ave., Phoenix. Reed Martin is the featured speaker. \$30 fee includes lunch. **Registration deadline: Sept. 1.**

**Sept. 22 Taking Another Look at Due Process.** Sponsored by the ADE/ESS, 602-542-3084 or [tschamb@ade.az.gov](mailto:tschamb@ade.az.gov). Arizona State University -West, 4701 W. Thunderbird, Phoenix. Reed Martin is the featured speaker. \$20 fee includes lunch. Hearing Officer training sessions will be open to observers such as mediators, special education personnel, and parents. **Registration deadline: Sept. 1.**

**Sept. 23 Southwest Conference on Special Education,** Marriott Airport Hotel, 1101 N. 44th St., Phoenix. Sponsored by the Arizona Center for Disability Law, 602-274-6287 or 800-927-2260. Fees and scholarships. 18 workshops. **Registration deadline: Aug. 28.**

**Oct. 19-21 Learning Disabilities Association of Arizona, 30th Annual Conference,** Mesa Sheraton Hotel, 602-294-0541 or e-mail [ldaaz@earthlink.net](mailto:ldaaz@earthlink.net). Fees and scholarships. Pre-conference advocacy training, video theater, and over 20 workshops from which to choose.

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